

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1-31: (Canceled)

32. **(Currently amended)** A binding for receiving footwear having a toe portion, a heel portion and an engagement member having a first receiver and a second receiver located on opposite lateral sides of the engagement member, comprising:

- a) a toe member for receiving the toe portion of the footwear;
- b) a heel member spaced from said toe member by a distance, said heel member for receiving the heel portion of the footwear;
- c) a first means for releasably engaging the first receiver;
- d) a second means for engaging the second receiver; and
- e) a third means for adjusting said distance between said toe and heel members, said third means extending between said toe and heel members;

wherein said first means and said second means secure the engagement member to the binding by the releasable engagement of said first means with said first receiver and the engagement of said second means with said second receiver.

33. **(Previously presented)** A binding according to claim 32, wherein said third means includes a threaded rod extending between said toe member and said heel member and threadedly engaging at least one of said toe member and said heel member.

34. **(Currently amended)** ~~A binding according to claim 32, wherein~~ A binding for receiving footwear having a toe portion, a heel portion and an engagement member having a first receiver and a second receiver located on opposite lateral sides of the engagement member, comprising:

- a) a toe member for receiving the toe portion of the footwear;
- b) a heel member spaced from said toe member by a distance, said heel member for receiving the heel portion of the footwear;
- c) a first means for releasably engaging the first receiver;
- d) a second means for engaging the second receiver; and
- e) a third means for adjusting said distance between said toe and heel members, said third means extending between said toe and heel members;

wherein said first means and said second means secure the engagement member to the binding by the releasable engagement of said first means with said first receiver and the engagement of said second means with said second receiver, said first means includes including a first latch having at least one first catch for engaging the first receiver and said second means includes including a second latch having at least one second catch for engaging the second receiver.

35. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 34, wherein said first latch has a closed position and said first means further includes a rotational spring for biasing said first latch into said closed position.

Claims 36-41: **(Canceled)**

42. **(Previously presented)** A binding adapted for use with a receiver having a cavity in an environment containing a coherent material that intermittently becomes lodged within the cavity during use of the binding, comprising:
- a) a latch having a closed position and a pivot axis, said latch attached to the binding for pivotal movement about said pivot axis;
  - b) a catch attached to said latch in spaced relationship to said pivot axis and adapted for removing the coherent material from the cavity; and
  - c) an opening extending through said latch and located between said pivot axis and said catch, said opening adapted to allow the coherent material removed from the cavity by said catch to be expelled from the region surrounding the cavity.
43. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 42, further comprising a rotational spring having a rotational axis substantially co-linear with said pivot axis and engaging said first latch, said rotational spring biasing said first latch into said closed position.
44. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 42, further including a base, said first and second catches coupled to said base.
45. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 42, wherein said base further includes a toe member and a heel member, said first latch and second latch each coupled between said toe member and said heel member.

46. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 45, further including an adjustment mechanism for adjusting the position of said toe member and said heel member with respect to one another.
47. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 46, wherein said adjustment mechanism includes a threaded rod extending between said toe member and said heel member and threadedly engaging at least one of said toe member and said heel member.
48. **(Currently amended)** A snowshoe, comprising:
- a) a floatation device;
  - b) a binding for attaching the snowshoe to an engagement member having a receiver, said binding comprising:
    - i) a base secured to said floatation device;
    - ii) a latch pivotably secured to said base and having a first rotational axis, a first position and a second position, said latch being pivotable between said first position and said second position about said first rotational axis so as to be releasably engageable with the receiver of the engagement member, said latch being self-clamping into engagement with the receiver ~~upon~~ with application of a force by the engagement member to said latch; and
    - iii) a rotational spring engaging said base and said latch and having a second rotational axis substantially co-linear with said first rotational axis, said rotational spring biasing said latch toward said first position.
49. **(Previously presented)** A snowshoe according to claim 48, wherein said floatation device comprises a frame and webbing attached to said frame, said binding being secured to at least one of said frame and said webbing.
50. **(Previously presented)** A snowshoe according to claim 48, wherein said rotational spring comprises a helical spring.
51. **(Withdrawn)** A snowshoe according to claim 48, wherein said rotational spring comprises a torsional spring.

52. **(Currently amended)** A binding releasably securable to an engagement member, comprising:
- a) a base;
  - b) a first means, in mechanical communication with said base, for releasably engaging the engagement member, said first means being self-clamping into engagement with the engagement member ~~upon~~ with application of a force by the engagement member to said first means.
53. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 52, wherein said base includes a toe member and a heel member spaced from said toe member by a distance, said binding further including a second means for varying said distance between said toe member and said heel member.
54. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 52, wherein the engagement member has a receiver and a coherent material may become lodged in the receiver, said binding further including a second means for ejecting the coherent material from the receiver and away from the engagement member.
55. **(Withdrawn)** A binding according to claim 52, wherein said first means includes a second means for biasing said first means into engagement with the engagement member when the binding is secured to the engagement member.
56. **(Original)** A binding adapted for use with a receiver having a cavity in an environment containing a coherent material that intermittently becomes lodged within the cavity during use of the binding, comprising:
- a) a base;
  - b) a first means engaging said base for releasably engaging the receiver,
  - c) a second means for ejecting the coherent material from the cavity; and
  - d) a third means for allowing the coherent material ejected from the cavity to move away from the receiver.
57. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 56, wherein said second means includes at least two points for breaking apart the coherent material.

58. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 56, wherein the cavity has an arcuate surface and said second means ejects the coherent material by causing the coherent material to slide substantially as a coherent unit along the arcuate surface.
59. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 56, wherein said first means includes a latch pivotably attached to said base.
60. **(Original)** A binding according to claim 59, wherein said third means includes an opening extending through said latch.
61. **(Withdrawn)** A method of engaging footwear with a binding, the footwear including an engagement member having a receiver defined by at least one cavity, comprising the steps of:
- a) providing a binding that includes a base having an upper surface, a longitudinal centerline, a latch pivotably attached to said base so as to be pivotable in a plane substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal axis and a biasing member, said latch having an engagement surface for slidably engaging the engagement member, said biasing member biasing said latch toward said longitudinal axis;
  - b) stepping into said binding generally in the direction of said upper surface such that the engagement member engages the engagement surface so as to first cause said latch to pivot away from said longitudinal axis against the bias of said biasing member and then cause said latch to engage, via the bias of said biasing member, the at least one cavity of the engagement member.
62. **(Withdrawn)** A method of adjusting a binding to suit footwear having a size, comprising the steps of:
- a) providing a binding having a toe member, a heel member spaced from said toe member by a distance, an adjustment mechanism extending between, and engaging, said toe member and said heel member, a first latch coupled between said toe member and said heel member and a second latch spaced from said first latch and coupled between said toe member and said heel member;
  - b) adjusting said adjusting mechanism such that said distance between said toe member and said heel member is suited to the size of the footwear.

63. **(Withdrawn)** A method of ejecting a coherent material from a receiver of an engagement member, wherein the receiver comprises a cavity having an arcuate surface, comprising the steps of:
- a) providing a binding that includes a latch having a catch for engaging the cavity;
  - b) engaging said catch with said cavity such that said catch causes the coherent material to slide along the arcuate surface as a substantially coherent unit.
64. **(Previously presented)** A binding for resisting a force having a direction, comprising:
- a) a base having a surface for confronting the sole of a piece of footwear and a longitudinal centerline;
  - b) a latch pivotable relative to said base and having:
    - i) a position;
    - ii) a rotational axis;
    - iii) an engagement surface for receiving the force at a location thereon;
    - iv) a first offset between said rotational axis and said location, said first offset being substantially parallel to the direction of the force and extending in a direction away from said surface from a first line passing through said rotational axis to a second line extending along said engagement surface; and
    - v) a second offset between said rotational axis and said location, said second offset being substantially perpendicular to the direction of the force and extending from a third line extending through said rotational axis to a fourth line passing through said engagement surface in a direction generally away from said longitudinal centerline of said base; and
  - c) a means for biasing said latch into said position when the force is not acting on said engagement surface.

**Claims 65-67: (Canceled)**

68. **(New)** A binding according to claim 52, wherein said base includes an upper surface and, when said first means is engaged with the engagement member, said first means is pivotably self-clamping into more forceful engagement with the engagement member upon application

of a force by the engagement member to said first means in a direction substantially perpendicular to said upper surface of said base.

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